

SECRET

10 April 1963

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Evaluation of Reports Furnished by Senator Keating (OGC/LC routing of 8 March)

(Note: The following reports, to which earlier memoranda have not addressed themselves, were contained in a letter from Cuba dated 17 February, forwarded to Senator Keating's office under covering letter of 26 February:

1. Some Russians are in the Escambray with the Cuban resistance.
2. All cars heading to Santiago or Baracoa are searched by one Soviet and one militiaman.
3. Soviet forces in Cuba do their most dangerous work under cover of darkness, transporting offensive weapons. There are missile bases all over the island, but the Russians have built prefabricated houses on top of them so that they cannot be detected by the U-2.)

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1. Since the beginning of the year we have received numerous reports, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] that numbers of Soviet soldiers--varying from two to 34--had deserted from their units. The area most commonly cited in such reports is the Sierra Escambray region of southern Las Villas province. [REDACTED] have also reported that Soviet soldiers have deserted and joined anti-Castro guerrilla groups. There are also unconfirmed reports that joint Cuban-Soviet drives in the Escambray have resulted in the capture of several probable Soviet AWOLs. We have no substantiating evidence for such reports, but believe that some level of desertion by Soviet soldiers is probable, and that anti-Castro groups might well offer help.

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2. If these reports refer to the Soviet armored camp at Santiago de las Vegas south of Havana and the military airfield at Playa Baracoa west of Havana, we have no reports of the searching of vehicles in the general vicinity, but a vehicle check at the entrance to such major military installations would be a normal security practice.

Guantanamo Naval Base has received several reports since mid-January of highway checkpoints in eastern Cuba. These would be pertinent if Senator Keating's source refers to Santiago de Cuba west of Guantanamo, and Baracoa on the north coast, almost at the eastern tip. According to one report, Soviet and Cuban personnel about 10 January set up six joint checkpoints on the highway between Guantanamo and Santiago, and local rumors said they were looking for Soviet deserters. The reports reached the US press about 12 February.

3. There have been consistent reports to this effect from sources whose bona fides cannot be checked and who are not available for further interrogation. There has been extensive construction using prefabricated portions of buildings, and we do know that some sensitive work is done at night--such as the unloading of military cargoes from incoming Soviet ships. Unusually heavy truck traffic also is often scheduled for night hours when highway traffic is at its lowest.

There are, of course, "missile bases all over the island," and the lay observer, unless he is reporting to a trained interrogator with debriefing aids, generally cannot distinguish between a surface-to-air or cruise missile and an offensive weapon. We have established on several occasions recently that what untrained observers reported as "small prefabricated houses" were actually cruise-missile crates.

We have seen no specific reports matching those furnished by Senator Keating that missile launchers or bases are being hidden in or under housing; most

such reports allege that the equipment is hidden in caves.

All such reports of concealed weapons, of course, cannot be disproved categorically without thorough on-site inspection.

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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE 4 April 1963
TO: [REDACTED] BX-1		
ROOM NO. 7 E 32	BUILDING Hqs	
REMARKS: Attached are the most recent reports furnished to us by Senator Keating's office today. Would you please work up some brief comments so that I can report back to Senator Keating? In addition, they now have requested comments on the material I forwarded to you under routine slip dated 8 March 1963.		
OC / Cuban Task Force has not Atts. seen [REDACTED]		
FROM: [REDACTED] OGC/LC		
ROOM NO. 7 D 07	BUILDING Hqs	EXTENSION 6121

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FORM NO. 241
1 FEB 55

REPLACES FORM 36-8
WHICH MAY BE USED.

☆ GPO : 1957-O-439445

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